

Council tax summons

Your questions answered

Why have I received a summons?

You have received a summons because the full balance of your council tax for the period shown on the summons is now due, and payment has not been received from you.

The full amount could now be due because it relates to a past period, or because you have lost your right to pay your current year's council tax by instalments.

For example, you may have received a reminder notice advising you to pay the amount due within seven days or the full amount would become due. If you did not bring your account up to date, then you have lost your right to pay by instalments and the full amount is now due.

What should I do now I have received this summons?

You should pay the amount due in full, including the summons costs of £77.50, before the court date.

Can I arrange a payment plan with the council?

Yes, you can arrange a payment plan in one of three ways:

- Online. Simply visit the website at www.rbwm.gov.uk and scroll down to council tax. From there you will be able to follow the links to set up your own arrangement.
- Return the letter we send you after the court date with your payment proposal. You can start making payments before we write to you.
- Contact Customer Services on 01628 683850 if you don't have access to set up your payment arrangement online.

Costs of £117.50 will be added to the council tax due.

An instalment plan may depend on you giving us your employment details.

What if I don't pay in full?

The council will apply to the Magistrates Court for a Liability Order to be issued against you. A further £40.00 costs will be payable.

What if I pay the council tax part but not the costs of £77.50?

The council will apply to the Magistrates for a Liability Order to be issued for the £77.50. Further costs of £40.00 will be applied for so the amount due will be £117.50.

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Do I have to attend the Court hearing?

No. Most people do not attend the hearing and the council will ask the Magistrates to award the Liability Order in your absence. It is your right to appear in court if you wish.

If I can't afford to pay the amount in full, can I appear in court and arrange payment plan with the Magistrates?

No. The Magistrates do not have the power to set instalments. If they are satisfied that the amount is due and has not been paid, they must issue the Liability Order.

I have been paying the council tax but my payments have been late, if I attend court, will the Magistrates take this into account?

No. The Magistrates will issue the Liability Order if you have lost the right to pay by instalments and have not paid the amount due in full. See payment plan information above.

I may be entitled to council tax support for the period that this summons is for. If I attend court, will the Magistrates take this into account?

No. The Magistrates cannot take into account the fact that you have a claim for council tax support claim outstanding.

We would suggest however that you contact the benefits section on 01628 796036 **before the court date** to discuss your claim for council tax support and to make sure they have all the information required to make a decision.

If you feel you may be entitled to council tax support, please visit the council's website at www.rbwm.gov.uk to make an application. For advice on council tax support call 01628 796036.

What happens after the court hearing?

If you haven't already agreed a payment plan with the council (see above), a letter will be sent to you requesting information from you about your financial circumstances and asking for an offer of payment.

It is likely that this letter will be sent to you by the council's enforcement agents and you must then deal direct with them and not the council.

It's easy to set up instalments online at www.rbwm.gov.uk. Click on council tax and follow the links.

What happens if I don't agree to pay the amount due, or if I make an arrangement to pay and do not keep to it?

The following are examples of how the council can enforce payment if you do not agree to pay or do not maintain a payment arrangement:



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- The use of a debt enforcement agency to collect the amount outstanding. This will mean you will incur further costs.
- Deductions directly from your earnings.
- Deductions from your benefit.
- Bankruptcy proceedings.
- Charging order on your property.

Please contact us as soon as possible to make an arrangement to pay or if you are having difficulty paying so it doesn't get to any of the stages above.

E-mail council.tax@rbwm.gov.uk
Write Council Tax, PO Box 3446, Town Hall, St Ives Road,
Maidenhead SL6 1NY
Telephone 01628 683 850